

# FIELD CODE SHEET – Colonial Waterbird Colony Survey

## **HABITAT** Division - Vegetated

Class	Formation (NM Habitat)	NM Code
<b>Forest</b> (Generally, >60% canopy cover, crowns interlocking)	Coniferous plantation or shelterbelt-Forest	CPLF
	Mixed plantation or shelterbelt-Forest	MPLF
	Coniferous/Pine-Forest	CNPF
	Coniferous/Deciduous - Forest	CNDF
	Evergreen/Red Cedar-Forest	EVCF
	Lowland Deciduous-Forest	LODF
	Upland Deciduous-Forest	UPDF
	Seasonally flooded lowland deciduous-Forest	FLDF
	Lowland Deciduous Island	LODI
<b>Woodland</b> (Open 25-60% canopy cover)	Maintained parkland	MPRK
	Deciduous plantation or orchard	DCPL
	Coniferous plantation or shelterbelt-Woodland	CPLW
	Mixed plantation or shelterbelt-Woodland	MPLW
	Coniferous/Pine-Woodland	CNPW
	Coniferous/Deciduous – Woodland	CNDW
	Evergreen/Red Cedar-Woodland	EVCW
	Lowland Deciduous-Woodland	LODW
	Upland Deciduous-Woodland	UPDW
	Seasonally flooded lowland deciduous-Woodland	FLDW
<b>Shrubland</b>	Upland Deciduous-Shrubland	UPSH
	Lowland Deciduous-Shrubland	LOSH
	Shrub marsh - Shrubland	WTSH
<b>Herbaceous</b>	Tallgrass prairie	TALP
	Midgrass prairie	MIDP
	Tallgrass savanna	TLSV
	Midgrass savanna	MDSV
	Sedge meadow (seasonally flooded)	SEG
	Wetland/vegetated wetland (cattails, bulrush, etc.)	WTCT
	Wetland/floating leaved plants	WTFL
	Wetland/dry	WTDR
	Fen wetland	FEN
	Cool-season grass (brome, Kentucky Bluegrass)	CSGR
	Golf course	GOLF
	Cemetery	CEM
<b>Sparse Vegetation</b>	Open bluff/cliff	BLF
	Algific talus slopes	ALG
	Sparsely vegetated sand/mud flats	MUD
	Lake shore	LKSH
<b>Constructed/Artificial</b>	Non-farm yards	NFYD
	Farm yards	FMYD
	Schoolyards	SCHL
	Commercial/industrial	COMI
	Residential	RESI
	Business Park	BUSP

**Agricultural Lands**

Row crop (corn, soybeans, oats)	ROWC
Pasture/hay/CRP	PAST
Woody fencerow	WDFC
Grass fencerow	GRFC
Mixed woody/grass fencerow	MXFC
Grassed waterway or terrace	GRSS
Drainage ditch	DICH

*Division - Water*

<b>Class</b>	<b>Formation (NM Habitat)</b>	<b>NM Code</b>
<b>Open Water</b>	Pond/impoundment	POND
	Open water (reservoir or lake)	OPNW
	River/stream (bordered by trees/shrubs)	RIVR
	Open riverine (bordered by non-woody vegetation)	ORIV

**Nest Stage Codes**

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>1</b> = nest building                    | <b>2</b> = egg laying      |
| <b>3</b> = incubation                       | <b>4</b> = hatching        |
| <b>5</b> = downy young                      | <b>6</b> = feathered young |
| <b>7</b> = young flying or ready for flight | <b>8</b> = renesting       |
| <b>9</b> = loafing at colony site           |                            |

## **DNR VWMP – Colonial Waterbird Nesting Instructions**

**Materials:** Binoculars, Spotting scope, Data sheet, Instructions, Field code sheet, Pencil, Field guide.

### DO ONCE

***Sections On Data Sheet: Observer, Location Information, Colony Site Landowner, Colony Site Observations***

#### Step 1: Find a Colony

**Species of Interest:** black-crowned night heron, cattle egret\*, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, great egret\*, green heron, little blue heron\*, yellow-crowned night heron\* \* = Rare

#### **Tips to Find a Colony:**

Look in early spring/winter before leaf out.

Sometimes they are easier to spot from the water so grab a canoe!

#### Step 2: Map the Colony– Getting UTM coordinates and write your Access Directions

Write detailed access directions that would allow someone whose never been to the nest to get to the correct observation spot.

#### Get UTM

1. Mark the location of colony on a map (sportsman's atlas, topo, plat map) and make note of the surrounding landscape. With the plat map or sportsman's atlas you can easily determine your Tier (Township), range and section which you can then plug into [ortho.gis.iastate.edu](http://ortho.gis.iastate.edu). You can then pinpoint the nest location here and get your UTM coordinates.
2. Mark the nest location on a detailed map and send to the wildlife diversity program and we will determine your UTM coordinates. 1436 255<sup>th</sup> St., Boone, IA 50036
3. Mark nest location with GPS unit –make sure it is recording UTMS and is using the NAD 83 datum.

### DURING VISIT ONE IN MID- APRIL

***Sections On Data Sheet: Colony Site Observations, Human activity, Nest Counts, Nest tree id***

#### Step 3: Collect Species and Habitat Data

1. The first year note the predominant habitat surrounding the nest (NM Habitat Code) as well as details about the trees the nest is in (species, status, DBH, height). This information is not likely to change from year to year so it is a good idea to keep track of this so you stay consistent - you may even want to create copies of the data sheet with this already filled in. If there is a change in future years note it.
2. Record the First Visit Date.
3. Make a note of the human activity (you will end up averaging this across both visits so just make notes now.)
4. Record Total Nests per species, Active Nests per species, and average Nest Stage Code per species. Record any additional species sightings in comments.

### DURING VISIT TWO IN LATE JUNE

***Sections On Data Sheet: Colony Site Observations, Human activity, Nest Counts***

#### Step 4: Collect Data on Young and Finalize Human Activity

1. Record the Second Visit Date.
2. Finalize human activity assessments and record.
2. Observe the nests (for around 30 minutes or however long it takes) and record

Total Young:     # of young if known, if you know nest has failed without producing young record a "0", if you do not know # of young leave this blank

**ENTER (<http://programs.iowadnr.gov/vwmp/default.asp>) OR SEND IN DATA BY AUGUST 1<sup>ST</sup>:**

**Wildlife Diversity Program, Attn: VWMP, 1436 255<sup>th</sup> St., Boone, IA 50036**